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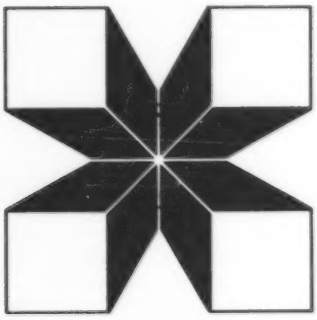

CANADA

SEMINAR ON EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

THE CASE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

91-00166/

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SEMINAR ON EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

The Case of Sub-Saharan Africa

28-30 May 1990
Hotel Méridien Ngor
Dakar

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SUMMARY

Senior representatives from many donor agencies supporting research in Africa met with senior African researchers and policy makers in Dakar from 28-30 May, 1990, to review the state of African research systems and needs in light of limited resources. Participants agreed that the benefits from research could be enormous but that the economic conditions in Africa are such that there is a danger of losing the considerable potential now existing.

Without some major new initiative, external funds may not increase significantly beyond the estimated $600 million now available and little growth can be expected from national resources. Therefore tough decisions may be required by Africans to set priorities on a limited set of research activities and to reduce the proliferation of new research organizations. Resources may have to be concentrated on centres of competence, with more emphasis on the quality of research and effective linkages. Countries must be prepared to cooperate more actively on a regional basis. At the same time, some way should be found to promote a rationalization of the present set of regional research institutions in Africa especially as Africa has a larger number of such institutions than do other developing regions.

For their part, donors have to reassess the way their resources are used. It is estimated that only one third of the funds designated for research support in Africa actually go to national researchers in Africa. Short term project support and limited donor cooperation severely constrain the build-up of strong and effective research institutions.

These broader issues need to be further explored and more critical analysis and information on research resources and systems are required.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In October 1988, the International Development Research Centre organized a first high-level meeting in Ottawa to discuss global issues and strategies for supporting developmental research. The genesis was a report prepared for IDRC by Dr. John Lewis on global funding of developmental research[1] by donors. Participants were senior persons from major research donor organizations and influential scientists from the Third World. They gave strong support to further exploration of broad, global issues relating to the evolution of developmental research and the identification of promising mechanisms or gaps in present patterns of funding. The meeting emphasized that a global overview could best be pursued through informal, high-level meetings building towards greater consensus, and cooperation.

2. As a result, the Centre was charged with organizing further meetings or "seminars" to focus on more specific issues. It was suggested that one promising area for an informal meeting would be to concentrate on sub-Saharan Africa, and a seminar was arranged by the Centre in Dakar, Senegal, from 28-30 May 1990.

3. The Dakar meeting was organized on similar lines to the Ottawa one. Participants (Annex I) received beforehand a list of some suggested issues (Annex II) and some documents and background material were distributed (Annex III). The purpose of these informal seminars is to build towards a greater common understanding of ideas, problems and possible solutions, and in so doing to lay some basis for better working together. As one person suggested: "Looking back over the last twenty years, our experience shows how important ideas and concepts have been in the evolution of our thinking about development; we should not underestimate the power of exchanging views on these matters". The expectation for the meeting was therefore not one of creating consensus or identifying concrete actions to be undertaken jointly, but more to taking further steps towards achieving a shared view and, to the extent possible, a common approach to supporting developmental research.

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[1] "External Funding of Development-Related Research: a Survey of Some Major Donors", by John Lewis, Ottawa (IDRC-MR 160, September 1987).

4. The agenda was relatively free and was organized around the following headings:

1. National research in sub-Saharan Africa;

2. The role of regional and international research institutions, and of donor country research;

3. The role of external support.

5. The essential subject for discussion was the role that external donor organizations could play in the support of developmental research; the first two subjects were therefore to set the stage for a common understanding of the present circumstances. The introductory and first session on national research was chaired by Ivan Head, the President of IDRC. The second session and bulk of the third, on external support, were chaired by Jacques Diouf, Secrétaire Général, Banque centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, Senegal.

6. Since one of the main advantages of the meeting was to provide an overview of all of the resources available - financial, human and institutional - for developmental research in sub-Saharan Africa, the various sessions far from being hermetic, saw spillover of discussion from one to the next. The brief notes provided here try to group together the remarks on particular subjects made at different stages during the discussion in order to facilitate reference: the cost in doing so is that they do not reflect the spontaneity and flow of discussion. They can also give the erroneous impression that there was an intention to deal with any of these subjects exhaustively. This was not the case. Understandably, discussion of the role of donor support permeated all exchanges, though it has been here grouped under the last session as much as possible.

7. There were a number of **points of apparent consensus** which emerged during discussion:

a) the importance of research in the development process " no country has developed without research and mastery of science and technology";

b) the need for this research to be indigenously controlled and, in part, undertaken;

c) the important role that official development assistance could play in supporting developmental research;

d) the sense that the present African circumstance is precarious and yet that the region has built up a considerable research potential that should not be overlooked and that must be enabled to play an appropriate role in contributing solutions to development problems;

e) the importance, given the shortage of domestic and donor resources, for an overview of all the research resources that could be brought to focus on the region's development problems - national, regional, international, transnational; and

f) for major decisions affecting the use and allocation of this resource to be guided by persons from the region and not by donors.

II. NATIONAL RESEARCH

8. Under the heading **"The Enabling Environment"**, the meeting touched on external factors that determine how successful the research effort can be. These were mostly well beyond the influence of those attending the meeting.

The Enabling Environment:

9. ***(a) Funding Levels:*** participants agreed to take the macro-economic picture as given, though many of the problems confronting research were resource constraints linked to this fundamental condition. They referred again and again to the fact that African governments are preoccupied at present with **short term considerations** almost to the exclusion of all else. This short-term focus contrasts with the needs of research, an activity requiring a long-term perspective for its undertaking and in building up indigenous institutions and capacity. In terms of governments' commitment to research, science and technology were given a preeminent position in the Lagos Plan of Action, crafted nearly a decade ago, but resources have not been available to follow through. This commitment was still alive but subjugated to the necessity to manage the short-term crises.

10. ***(b) Governance***: governance came up in several aspects. First, the need for science and research to take place in an environment conducive to free exchange and allowing for autonomy, an environment which was noticeably absent from some African countries. Second, the pre-eminent role played by government-funded institutions in research in Africa, where other regions had a more varied array of institutions. Third, the frequent changes in government institutional responsibilities for research (from department in the Ministry of Planning to Science Secretariat to Ministry, for instance). Fourth, the necessary political underpinning to the regionalization of some research activities or even to successful research cooperation across frontiers in the region ("transnational").

11. ***(c) Scientific Culture:*** the point was made many times that developmental research and scientific activity cannot take place in isolation or, perhaps, even in ivory towers. There must be a necessary link with society at large, both as a partaker of the knowledge generated through research, and as a respecter of the integrity of scholarship. This led to some discussion of science and education in general, but more particularly to the role of universities and the importance of graduate study. There was,

equally, recognition that the impulse to scientific development in the North had often been one of a quest for a competitive edge, military superiority and power.

The State of National Research:

12. One session was devoted to looking at the state of national research. This is the essential building block in any global view of research, both as a producer of results but also as a conduit for appropriating the products of research undertaken elsewhere. There was considerable discussion of the desirable and feasible size of national research for the many small countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with commensurate attention paid to sharing research capacity and results between countries on a regional or "transnational" basis.

13. ***(a) Need for Research:*** the meeting did not revisit all the arguments for the importance of research in the development process. Many of the macro-economic adjustment programs in Africa relied on cutting imports and increasing exports, but this was seldom linked to the need to bolster these countries technological capacity. Research was required not just on the problems of development but on the way and the context in which these problems were posed. Much that had been tried by donors and governments in the name of "development" had not worked, and research should be able to provide new avenues and models, without which there would be a tendency to repeat the errors of the past - "il ne faut pas confondre les problèmes avec la problématique".

14. There was general agreement that researchers from the region must be involved in a major way in providing research results for their societies. "Africa must be actively engaged in the production of research results". "Africans must do original research. We cannot just rely on adapting knowledge from outside". There was also discussion of the relative importance of research for problem-solving and basic research - "You cannot have good applied without some basic".

15. ***(b) Lack of a "System":*** participants questioned the appropriateness of the word "system" in national research system, and examples were given of the lack of systematic overview, and of overall research strategy in setting objectives. There was criticism that some of the language and conceptual split between national, regional and international research were too closely tied to the experience and analysis of the agricultural sector and the notion of NARS - national agricultural research system - might be inappropriate for other research sectors. It was also pointed out that much development of research in the North had been unplanned, and that even now "a strategic overview" was lacking in many industrialized countries. Still the resource constraints and enormous needs in developing countries argued for considerable care

in the allocation of resources and analysis of opportunity costs of investments.

16. The example of the "systematic" policy pursued for a time by Senegal in the area of research was reviewed briefly. Policies and instruments had been put in place to ensure popular awareness of science and research, research had been the subject of detailed planning, articulation had been developed with the various interested parties in ministries and the broader community of users, universities had been linked into broad national research directions and funding, training of researchers was undertaken only according to the priority areas identified, and thought was given to the sustainability of the research enterprise that was established, though ultimately this was allowed to expand beyond this notional limit.

17. While it was recognized that the role of donors could be facilitated by the existence of a national research plan, it was pointed out that donors were often part of the problem in working against a systematic approach to research. "Donors pull in different directions and each have their own funding conditions and constraints, which means that the recipient has to fit in with them, rather than vice versa". One participant proposed some of the conditions that would make it possible to talk of a national system:

i) autonomy;
ii) a system that is capable of reproducing itself;
iii) a capacity for internal self-evaluation;
iv) a capacity to change and react to circumstances; and,
v) a capacity to identify its own priorities and programs and to undertake them.

18. This clearly meant that the influence of external actors, particularly donors, would be substantially diminished. Would donors be willing to increase support to national research at the same time as reducing their influence?

19. *(c) Management of Existing Resources:* many participants acknowledged that there were problems in the management of existing research resources and institutions. One example was that appointments were not always made on the basis of merit.

20. *(d) Human and Financial Resources for Research:* in spite of all other difficulties, it was recognized that sub-Saharan Africa had built up a substantial research resource during the last twenty years. There were tough questions about the size of a feasible national research effort "In how many areas can small countries afford to build and sustain a critical mass?" "What can be said about what this critical mass is in key subjects?". This contrasted with

earlier expectations that countries could or should develop research in all the areas where the need arose. There was a requirement for greater selectivity, both in terms of research areas and of institutions that could be supported with existing African and external resources. It was essential that African researchers and authorities themselves be prepared to face and decide these issues, so that key decisions did not fall to donors. Some preferred to eschew the term "institution strengthening" to concentrate on particular research teams or units; and there was a general recognition that research and training resources needed increasingly to be shared between countries - either on a formal regional basis or, less formally, between countries on a "transnational" basis.

21. There was considerable discussion of the picture of human and financial resources in Africa, and ready agreement that better information was required on this. On the basis of figures collected and published by ISNAR for the agricultural research sector, it was suggested that in that area there had been a major increase in the number of researchers, and that the region compared well with other developing regions in terms of the educational levels of researchers (number of Ph.D.'s and Masters as a proportion of total agricultural researchers). This contrasted with a marked failure of research funding to keep pace with the number of researchers and a consequent drop in operational funds available per researcher. This data might suggest a much more cautious approach to training more researchers, and greater concentration on ensuring that those researchers already at work had adequate funds and facilities to work effectively. Some participants had reservations about using these figures; others argued that they were important (though more information was required) but needed to be used differently depending on the circumstances of individual countries.

22. The number of research institutions had increased as a result of government and donor commitments, but subsequent funding was inadequate to keep all of those now in existence functioning effectively. Some creation of institutions had been donor driven. In cases, inadequate thought had been given to the sustainability of the institutions which were created. It was now essential to strengthen deserving existing institutions, avoid creating new ones and be prepared to close down those that were not viable.

23. There were specific observations on the status and conditions of researchers, and the need to provide an adequate working environment for well-trained researchers. Many were joining the brain drain not just for economic reasons, but because they felt unable to pursue high-quality and relevant work in their present circumstances. Equally, salaries were low and moonlighting meant that in some cases only limited time was really spent on essential research work. This subject was addressed at greater length in considering what donors could do to improve the situation (see para

53, below). It was also suggested that too much donor funding was being devoted to paying nationals from donor countries working either in Africa or in their home countries.

24. Universities were seen as a major underused research resource. They have an immense fund of research capacity - which is perhaps least well-harnessed to national developmental research efforts in Francophone countries. They were also inadequately linked to potential users of research. In the past, Senegal had planned on encouraging university staff to spend 40% of their time on teaching, 30% on service to the community and 30% on research, but this split would have required additional resources from donors. University researchers could undertake some contract research, but the danger of excessive concentration on contract work was that the research agenda was set by outside interests, and that questions of national priority would not receive attention.

25. In view of the paucity of reliable information on the allocation of resources to research, numbers of researchers, available operational and capital funds etc, participants agreed that more work needed to be undertaken, and that this might be one important area for cooperation between donors and with African researchers and research managers.

26. *(e) Linkages Between Researchers and Research Users:* there was criticism of the weak links between research and potential users of research results. Government research institutions and universities have not established adequate mechanisms, and researchers are often not oriented to the needs of the market. The case of Brazil was advanced as one where industry had successfully used local universities to do basic, mission-oriented research. Examples were given, particularly from Nigeria, of how the private sector can play a role in looking at the gaps in existing research where further work is required to make research useable. Donors sometimes experience problems in funding the private sector because of patents and the need for follow-up investment. A number of donors expressed their willingness to fund private sector research efforts related to development. They were also urged to consider providing incentive financing for research results to be acted upon or to help interested researchers to set up enterprises to capitalize on research.

27. There was a necessary role for the private sector as the State withdrew from some of the work that it had undertaken previously in the use of research outputs, such as seed multiplication and dissemination. Some of the implications of the changed division of labour between the private and public sector needed further study.

III. COLLABORATION WITH EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONS (Regional, International, Donor Country)

28. Participants recognized that national research efforts need in all cases to be supplemented and complemented by a division of labour with other levels of research - by collaboration with other countries in the region ("transnational") through bilateral contacts or networking; by cooperation through and with formally constituted regional and international research centres; and by collaboration with research institutions in industrialized or donor countries. Larger, industrialized countries were also finding themselves more and more involved in research partnerships transcending national boundaries. The division of labour between levels in the region should not be a rigid one applied uniformly to all sectors - there was reluctance to allow the pattern of institutional organization and collaboration established for agriculture to be seen as a model for other sectors. The division of labour should be different in particular cases and need not be as formalized as in the agricultural case. The emphasis should be on seeking out and strengthening the most effective wherever it is to be found.

29. *Inter-Country Collaboration ("Transnational"):* the recognition of the limitations on individual countries building up research capacity or undertaking research in all the areas of possible interest argued strongly for seeking ways of combining existing strengths in the region. Inter-country collaboration was seen as a natural way to overcome some of the problems and to get the best possible pay off from investment in research. The meeting noted some political obstacles; and the importance that discussions take place in the region on the basis of recognising that some countries had "national" centres of excellence that could serve a role in the region. Exchange might be most successful where it was based on some notion of mutual interest -"You can only get into exchanges when you have something to swap".

30. In spite of considerable interest in transnational collaboration, the meeting focused more on the case of "regional" institutions that were formally constituted with some mandate broader than serving the purpose of one country.

31. *Regional Institutions:* results were given from a study[2] undertaken by IDRC in the mid-eighties showing the number of regional

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[2] "The Role of International and Regional Research Institutions", IDRC, Ottawa (Searching 1985).

institutions carrying out research or fulfilling a role related to research. This showed that Africa had been the region with the fastest growth in this type of institution in the seventies and early eighties; the study identified a total of over 60 such institutions and suggested that they might account for as much as $200 million per year from donor and national funding. These institutions had often been set up with inadequate regard for their sustainability and for the opportunity cost that they represented.

32. Participants readily recognized that some regional institutions had a major role to play and were working effectively. They were able to "process, package and collect information " and encourage awareness of research at the national level. In the case of the smallest countries, there were very severe limits to the research they could undertake and some regional research centres might be required to take their interests into account. Participants had available to them the proceedings of a workshop held by CODESRIA on the role of regional institutions in social sciences[3] where six advantages had been identified for these institutions:

i) the "thematic terrain" is not contiguous with the national space;
ii) regional cooperation widens the scope and horizons of researchers;
iii) the paucity of resources at the national level means that there is a better chance of constituting the necessary critical mass at the regional level;
iv) involvement in regional cooperation increases the status of research and the researcher;
v) the enhancement of south-south collaboration;
vi) regional networks backed by a regional institution can provide some protection to researchers from repressive national conditions.

33. Despite recognizing the important potential role of regional institutions in research, there was considerable criticism of the present set: they had been established often on an ad hoc basis without regard to future funding (often creating an institution to "solve a problem"); there had been inadequate study of the real needs in particular sectors; the proliferation of institutions, driven both by donors and regional governments, meant that the present set was not sustainable; their linkages with national research were often weak and their work sometimes duplicative; their management was often controlled too much by political considerations (this was certainly not a problem exclusive to regional institutions in the sub-Saharan Africa region!).

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[3] "The Role of Regional Organizations in Building National Research Capacity in Africa", A CODESRIA Conference Report (December 1988).

34. A number of institutions are closing for lack of support; it was recommended that an African commission be established to look at the overall set, their sectoral coverage, and their present effectiveness and determine, based on the need for greater selectivity, which should receive the priority for funding. It was also suggested that more heed be paid to the governing boards of regional institutions. Without strong, credible managing boards, institutions became more vulnerable to individual circumstances.

35. *International:* the meeting did not discuss the particular case of international research centres at any length. There continued to be an inadequate link with national research, though there was much improvement compared to the seventies. Even here donor attempts to remedy the situation had been based on the creation of a new institution (ISNAR) - "it is not only African governments that see the creation of new institutions as a means of solving a problem".

36. The meeting heard a short account of the recent meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and suggestions for change in the role and structure of the present set of CG centres. Alternative approaches to that used in the CGIAR model might be less expensive.

37. *Industrialized/Donor Country Institutions:* one of the main recommendations of the Vienna 1979 United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development was to make it easier for developing countries to call on the research capacity of the industrialized countries. This continued to be of considerable interest but the conditions under which it occurred were quite varied.

38. Industrialized countries' developmental research communities could play a role in mobilizing opinion and funds to support research in developing countries. There was considerable variation in the way in which research partnerships or "twinning" were undertaken. Some felt that the donor country partner was too dominant in many partnerships - though others felt that good supervision and management by the donor agency could overcome this. Some countries, because of the labour intensity of managing research activities, were tending to give greater administrative responsibility to research institutions in the donor country.

39. There was variation in the degree to which donor country developmental research was funded from ODA funds - some had set a ceiling for the percentage of the research budget that could support domestic research (e.g. 10% for Sweden). Others reported that national research was being funded from "domestic" funds (eg. Norway, Netherlands). A number reported increasing difficulty in getting the domestic research community to focus on developmental research - the competition from other, more lucrative sources of funding, such as industry, was increasing.

IV. EXTERNAL SUPPORT

40. A study carried out by IDRC[4] on external support to developmental research for sub-Saharan Africa indicated that annual donor funding might be as high as $600 million, but that only one third of this was for support to national research efforts undertaken by African scientists. The rest was channelled to regional and international centres, donor country institutions, expatriate scientists and training in donor country institutions. Discussion at the meeting looked at:

1) the funding levels;
2) the quality of support;
3) the efforts donors could deploy to improve effectiveness;
4) the importance of better information to permit a global overview of funding devoted to research;
5) the need for a long-term approach and protecting research in Africa from some of the vagaries associated with the critical economic situation.

41. ***Funding Levels:*** most donors were not sanguine about achieving overall increases in Official Development Assistance (ODA). They nevertheless reported that donor organizations were attaching greater importance to research and its funding. They therefore looked at the scope for increasing the funding of developmental research within existing ODA ceilings, if necessary by diverting funds from elsewhere in view of the critical long-term importance of research, or of improving the effectiveness of present flows and ensuring that a higher proportion of the total funds went to support African researchers working in the region. Most participants reported that there was greater acceptance in their organizations of research as an integral and vital part of the development process. African participants recognized the need for realism but cautioned against acceptance of fixed short-term ODA ceilings as an excuse for not pressing for increased total funding.

42. Several organizations remained cautiously optimistic about increasing research funding. Denmark reported that their funding of research had increased, in part under pressure from the domestic scientific community, and partly from a greater clarity of purpose permitted by a meeting such as the first one held in Ottawa in 1988.

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[4] "Development Research Donors in Sub-Saharan Africa - A Review of Selected Agencies" by Andrew O. Asibey, Ottawa (IDRC-MR 256e, March 1990).

43. One other major aspect of funding related to the internal organization of donor organizations. Some had separate funds exclusively marked for research (e.g. the European Community, Netherlands, Sweden, Canada), others did not. In all cases, bilateral funds were available but these depended on African governments selecting research as a priority for external support.

44. In general, participants were agreed that funding constraints made it all the more necessary to be selective in providing support. This selectivity required an improved strategic overview of research resources and research needs in sub-Saharan Africa so that choices could be made with a view of the overall picture, in allocating resources to national, regional and international research. This made it all the more important that decisions be taken by African researchers and authorities, and not by external donors.

45. *For Whose Benefit?* participants were reminded of the title of a report on ODA by a Canadian Parliamentary committee[5] in looking at what was being done with present developmental research funding. Attention here focused on the research community that was being supported, and the way in which it was being supported, rather than on the ultimate beneficiaries who might use the products of research.

46. Most donors agreed that a greater proportion of ODA funds devoted to research should flow directly to indigenous scientists. Policy research, in particular, should be undertaken by Africans. African scientists should be used as often as possible on consultancies, evaluations etc. so that they gained valuable experience and improved south-south collaboration. Future surveys of donor resources supporting developmental research should make the breakdown of total funds between categories of recipients much more explicit.

47. It was recalled that the World Bank had estimated that 100,000 expatriates were still employed in Africa, at an approximate annual cost of US $4 billion. No-one proposed the elimination of technical assistance, but it was suggested that both donors and African governments had a tendency to overlook African scientific potential and all too easily to call on outside expertise. Cases, such as evaluations of some government-run projects, were mentioned where local experts might find it embarassing to be part of a critical review, but in general there was a feeling that much more use could be made of the region's existing potential. On the basis of the World Bank and IDRC figures, if the funds from a 5% reduction in technical assistance were channelled to African researchers, the external funding to this group would be doubled.

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5 "For Whose Benefit?" Report of The Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade on Canada's Official Development Assistance Policies and Programs, (May 1987).

48. *Long-Term Support:* one African participant, having made clear that he thought research required increased funding, said that if as a government minister he had to decide on the allocation of external aid, he would not be able to justify anything going to research. A key question for the donors, then, was: " How to keep the research community alive and working in Africa" rather than accepting as inevitable the exodus of trained researchers from the region.

49. Donors were obliged to look at how they could ensure adequate funding to African research to ensure the survival and productivity of the research capacity that had been built up at considerable expense. Were they "imposing" a long-term view, particularly if African governments did not provide sufficient priority for research when requesting bilateral aid?

50. There have recently been several major proposals for long-term funds which could cushion research from short-term funding vagaries. One, which was presented briefly to the meeting, for a FIRA (Fondation internationale pour la Recherche Africaine), was being presented to the European Community for its consideration by France. The other might be recommended as part of the work of the Future Actions Committee of the "Consultation on the Management of Science for Development in Africa". Since these were scheduled to be discussed in other fora, they did not receive much attention in Dakar, but a number acknowledged that a global fund did provide some of the necessary guarantees for long-term support. However, donors were anxious to avoid the impression that they would or could substitute for the vital support that was required from the governments of the region.

51. Participants emphasized the necessity of viewing research as long-term. Ten years was felt by some to be too short a period for results to be expected. Donors reported different methods of ensuring longer-term support even while working through shorter-term projects. The drawbacks of project by project funding were obvious. Research (and probably other) external support required real confidence between recipient and donor so that problems could be discussed with candour. Donors were also criticised for having been unwilling to support existing programs and institutions and wishing instead to fund "new" initiatives.

52. *Concentration of Support:* the seminar heard that African participants at a recent consultative meeting on IDRC's proposed strategy for support to research in sub-Saharan Africa had advised caution with respect to concentrating support on fewer institutions; they were concerned that donor support could create "ivory towers" inadequately linked to others in the region. They were supportive of ensuring the survival and development of "centres of competence" in the region, but over-concentration of donor resources could lead to institutions that are donor-driven.

Centres of competence would develop best where there was already a broad science base providing a conducive environment; they could "not be legislated into existence". There would need to be mechanisms, such as networks, to ensure that all could benefit from these centres and to ensure that their work had some regional applicability.

53. ***What to Support:*** donors also addressed the problem of the respective responsibilities of donors and recipient governments when they discussed actual items of support. There was considerable discussion of the desirability of paying salary supplements to African scientists. Donor practice was quite split: some included it as a matter of course in funding research in the region. Salaries in the majority of countries were too low for researchers to be able to be "full-time". Many examples of moonlighting were given. There were also examples of "hidden" supplements through payment of inflated per diems etc.

54. Others felt that donors should not tamper with the salary scales which existed. Such action could have a distorting effect; the emphasis had to be on African governments recognizing the problems of the present situation and revising salaries accordingly. There was interest in methods that would permit funding of these items without undermining the existing structure.

55. Participants from the region argued for **flexibility in donor practice**. "We always seem to hear - well this we can fund, but that type of thing, no!" The key should be on getting research functioning effectively and on providing support to those items that were required for this to happen - "why help to build the well and then refuse to pay for the rope?". They generally supported providing supplements but also pointed out that it was working conditions in general not just salaries that were the cause of the brain-drain. It was suggested that rather than funding only projects, there should be a willingness to pay overhead funds or to contribute to the constitution of research funds in African institutions, particularly universities, so that the research community in general gets some benefit. (This is already an accepted feature of contracts with many universities in the North). This would also attenuate the division between the haves and have-nots -those undertaking research on externally-funded projects, and those not. The plea for flexibility carried over to other items as well - willingness to waive counterpart funds on occasion, and to provide books and other documentation.

56. Underlying discussion was the recognition that increased donor flexilibity should be accompanied by steady efforts to ensure that African governments recognized the importance of research and provided greater support to it as a result. Governments should not be able to drop all obligations to fund research, nor were they likely to do so. Donors might be willing to fund, for conjunctural

reasons, more items than they would usually wish, but "don't let up on the pressure for African governments to recognize the importance of research and to provide appropriate funding". This represented some kind of a compromise between donors accepting an increased role in funding research, and persons from the region accepting that it was up to them to ensure the long-term viability of research and to take the steps necessary to guarantee this.

57. *Coordination:* donors recognized that there were severe limitations to working together (other than contributing to large funds) in a coordinated way, but equally recognized that support from individual sources could be more effective when provided in the context of a common long-term view and approach. " Donors must work and think together; they cannot achieve enough separately".

58. The meeting heard a succinct account of the experience of the Special Program for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR), which had functioned quite well as a "club de réflexion" and a mechanism for exchanging information. It seemed however that the difference in donor methods, and reluctance to discuss future spending plans, were severe limitations to collective action by a group of donors. The roles of better information exchange both on actual funding and on perspectives were, however, important. It was also suggested that with SPAAR now being chaired by a World Bank Vice-President responsible for direct program funding (VP, Africa Regional Office), its role as a coordinator of funding might be enhanced.

59. There was a sense of the differences that exist at times between the World Bank and other donors, and between bilateral donors. The World Bank usually plays the leadership role in donor coordination in which it is involved, and expects other donors to follow along. Donors had varying perceptions of World Bank initiatives. One - for a fund to contribute towards building and strengthening African capacities in policy analysis and economic management - was mentioned in the meeting; since it was to be the subject of a specially-arranged donor pledging conference the following week in Paris, it was not discussed in detail. The initiative was welcomed by some, but seen as being too restrictive in its content by others.

60. **Including recipient institutions and governments in discussion of coordination was recognised as being of primordial importance.** National mechanisms may need to be strengthened for undertaking this role, but no coordination should be considered without the active involvement of recipients at all levels. UNDP was playing a role in reinforcing national capacity in this regard. Donors should ensure better exchange of information between each other and with recipients, and should rely on "concertation" including sharing ideas and plans, rather than trying for detailed coordination. While recognizing the limits of donor collaboration, donors must not cease to try to improve the existing system. The present meeting was one such way of ensuring better exchange on a frank and candid basis.

61. ***Effectiveness of Support to Research:*** individual participants referred to cases of effective support to research and to the "impact" of the use of the products of research. There was recognition that all interested parties, both in developing countries and donor organizations, needed to do better at documenting the products of their efforts and the role that research and the use of its results were playing in the development process. The case for research needed to be made more forcefully both in African countries and within donor organizations. It was agreed that there is scope for better cooperation in documenting successful experiences.

62. There was also discussion of closer collaboration in evaluation of support to research. Since this area was still a relatively minor one in the overall flow of ODA funds, it had proved difficult to get adequate exchange of experiences. This might best be pursued on a bilateral basis but with scope in the future for introducing it as a subject to the DAC evaluation working group if it took on sufficient interest and importance.

63. ***Information Exchange:*** donors recognized that they required more information on the research environment in Africa - such as the present research priorities, the allocation of government and donor resources, the existence of adequate trained researchers, the differing strengths of institutions - no single organization could justify collecting all that was required, so cooperation and exchange were a necessity. African authorities needed to have greater access to such data as well. The nature of the decisions that might be required called for some kind of "resource mapping" of what is available throughout the region.

64. Existing data bases on funding efforts were mentioned - such as IDRIS (at IDRC), SPAAR and a documentary information system on Higher Education.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Recommendations for modifications in the approach by donors have been suggested in the narrative above. During the short final session, the following recommendations were made:

1. **Documentation of development effects:** donors and African researchers and research managers must be able to document the effects resulting from support for research. There is scope for cooperation in presenting cases.

2. **Exchange of information:** research donors and recipients must work to improve the collection and exchange of information as a basis for taking funding decisions. This can cover information on present funding (projects, programs) and overall studies on aspects of the research environment.

3. **Allocation of donor funds:** donors should be prepared to look more closely at the total flow of funds to research and to identify the different recipients of these funds - national, regional, international, donor country.

4. **Selectivity:** in view of the need to ensure the strengthening of some institutions, Africans will need to indicate that they are prepared to develop their own strategies for the development of research in the region and to make recommendations on the hard choices required.

One particular issue concerned the need for a commission or a group of influential Africans to look at the present array of regional institutions involved in research with a view to recommending which should be given priority for donor funding.

5. **A research funding ethic:** consideration should be given to the production of guidelines for the development of research and its funding by external donors. These could cover a range of "confidence-building" measures and ensure that the question "For Whose Benefit" receives adequate response in the support provided to developmental research.

6. **Future high-level seminars:** it was agreed that a further seminar continuing the exploration of developmental research and external funding should be organized in some eighteen months. There would be consultation on specific topics, but these might not necessarily be focused on Africa. IDRC undertook to canvas participants in due course for the preparation of a further seminar in this series.

ANNEX I

SEMINAR ON EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH THE CASE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA /

SÉMINAIRE SUR L'AIDE EXTÉRIEURE À LA RECHERCHE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT LE CAS DE L'AFRIQUE SUBSAHARIENNE

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ANNEX II

SEMINAR ON EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH :

THE CASE OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

DAKAR, SÉNÉGAL
28 - 30 May 1990

Suggested Agenda and Some Issues

1. **National Research in Sub-Saharan Africa :**

All countries are working under severe constraints on public expenditure through structural adjustment programs, etc. This discussion should take those for granted and look at what is being achieved (can be achieved) with present funding:

(i) The enabling environment: covering national interest in S&T policy and developmental research, and the links between research and development organizations in sub-Saharan Africa.

(ii) Developmental research:

(a) Recent figures (e.g. ISNAR on agriculture) show that there is increasing research capability in sub-Saharan African research, and that a key problem is falling or stagnant funds available for operating expenses per researcher. Should the priority continue to be in training more persons for research or in getting the best product from those in research (by supporting operating expenses)?

(b) Sub-Saharan Africa countries are mostly small in population (29 with less than 10 million, of which 16 with less than 5 million). What are the limits on countries being able to cover all the research areas they wish and what "critical mass" is required in key areas?

(c) If there is increasing pressure on the viability and continued effective working of some research institutions, should there be more focus on essential institutions to ensure that some at least are able to provide a conducive working environment and the research required in the development process?

(d) How adequate are linkages between national research systems for sharing information?

(e) Is lack of information on the present allocation of financial and human resources for research hampering national planning or external support in this area?

2. **Regional Cooperation and Regional/International Research :**

(i) Intercountry collaboration: Some countries have established mechanisms for joint research (e.g. SADCC). How can countries best cooperate in providing the research they require?

(ii) Regional/international: A survey of multilateral research institutions based in developing countries shows that the sub-set in Africa had the fastest growth in numbers in the 1970s and probably now requires over US $350 million a year. To what extent is this sub-set subject to regional planning and strategy setting? Are there significant gaps in coverage of key sectors (e.g. there is only one regional centre identified as working in health).

3. **External Support :**

A recent IDRC study suggests that external support to developmental research in Africa could be higher than US $500 million a year. World Bank overall figures on development assistance (not just research) suggest a total of 100,000 expatriates may be working in sub-Saharan Africa (perhaps costing $4 billion).

(i) Can donors do more to channel funds to assist indigenous research efforts? Can researchers from the region be used more frequently on consultancies for research or development projects in the region?

(ii) What are the cases of effective support to research in Africa?

(iii) Would support be more effective if donors and countries had better information on the present pattern of external funding of research? Has a more coordinated view such as that provided through SPAAR paid off and should it be adopted in other areas?

(iv) Should external support focus more on particular programs or institutions?

ANNEX III

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS BEFORE AND DURING THE MEETING

1) External Funding of Development-Related Research: A Survey of Some Major Donors - John P. Lewis - Ottawa (IDRC-MR 160, September 1987)

2) Health Research for Development - Nobel Conference NO. 15 - Wijk Conference Centre, Stockholm, 21-23 February 1990 - Conference Report 1990:1 - SAREC Documentation

3) Health Research - Essential Link to Equity in Development Commission on Health Research for Development - Oxford University Press, New York - 1990

4) The Role of Research in Finnish Development Cooperation - FINNIDA (Finnish International Development Agency)

5) The Role of Regional Organizations in Building National Research Capacity in Africa - A CODESRIA Conference Report - Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (Conference held in December 1988)

6) Proposal for a Council Regulation (EEC) Relating to a Research and Development Programme in the Field of Science and Technology for Development, 1987-1990 - COMM(86) 550 final/2 - Brussels, 17 November 1986 - Commission of the European Communities

7) Research on Schistosomiasis - Subprogramme: "Medicine, Health and Nutrition in the Tropics" - R&D Programme "Science and Technology for Development" (STD), Commission of the European Community (undated)

8) Deuxième programme de recherche et de développement "Science et technique au service du développement" (1987-1991), (87/C337/04), Journal officiel des Communautés européennes No. C 337/3 (16.12.87)

9) Conseil - Décision du Conseil du 14 décembre 1987 relative à un programme de recherche et de développement dans le domaine de la science et de la technique au service du développement (1987-1991), (87/590/CEE), Journal officiel des Communautés européennes No L 355/41 (17.12.87)

10) List of Projects Approved by CEC, Tranche 0, 1 , 2, 3 - Sub-programme: Tropical and Sub-tropical Agriculture - Science and Technology for Development, 1987-1990

11) Programme de recherche "Science et technologie au service du développement", Sous-programmes "Medecine, santé et nutrition dans les zones tropicales et subtropicales" et "Agriculture tropicale et subtropicale", Commission des Communautés européennes, Direction de la Science, de la recherche et du développement "Science et technologie au service du développement" 1987-91

12) Second Research & Development Programme in the Field of Science and Technology for Development, 1987-1991 - Sub-programme: Medicine, Health and Nutrition in Tropical and Sub-Tropical Areas - List of Selected Projects - Working Document (February 1990) - Commission of the European Communities, DG XII/G-4

13) Research & Development Programme "Science and Technology for Development" - Subprogramme: "Medicine, Health and Nutrition in the Tropics" - R&D Programme "Science and Technology for Development" (STD) - Commission of the European Community

14) Development Research Donors in Sub-Saharan Africa - A review of Selected Agencies, Andrew Asibey - IDRC - (MR 256e March 1990)

15) Notes on a Meeting on External Support to Developing Country Research, Ottawa, October 14-15, 1988 - IDRC - November 1988 - IDRC

16) La recherche scientifique en Afrique - par Jacques Gaillard et Roland Waast - in Afrique Contemporaine (pp. 3-29), 148 - 4e trimestre 1988

17) Strategic Choices for Sub-Saharan Africa - BG 42/8 - Paper prepared for discussion by the Board of Governors of IDRC in October 1989 - Office of Planning and Evaluation - IDRC

18) Building African Scientific Capacity for Agricultural Development by Carl K. Eicher, April 7, 1989